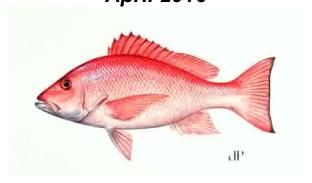
# Gulf of Mexico: 2016 Red Snapper Recreational Seasons and Approval of Final Rule to Reallocate Commercial and Recreational Catch Limits Frequently Asked Questions April 2016



#### What are the 2016 federal red snapper recreational season dates/lengths?

- The recreational sector fishing for red snapper is divided into two components
  - The private angling component,
  - The federally permitted for-hire component.
- The federal seasons for both components begin on **June 1**, **2016**, **at 12:01 a.m.**, **local time**.
- The closing dates are:
  - o Private angling component: June 10, 2016, at 12:01 a.m., local time.
  - Federally permitted for-hire component: July 17, 2016, at 12:01 a.m., local time.
- The two components were established through Amendment 40 to the fishery management plan in 2015.
- For more information on Amendment 40, go to <a href="http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\_fisheries/gulf\_fisheries/reef\_fish/2013/am40/index.html">http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\_fisheries/gulf\_fisheries/reef\_fish/2013/am40/index.html</a>.

#### How did NOAA Fisheries project the season lengths?

- NOAA Fisheries used the annual catch targets for the different components and past fishing conditions to project 2016 season lengths.
- State red snapper fishing seasons were also factored into the projections.
- After accounting for harvests in state waters, NOAA Fisheries projected a federal private angler season of 9 days to harvest the annual catch target.
- NOAA Fisheries projected the 2016 federally permitted for-hire red snapper annual catch target to be harvested in 46 days.
- For information on red snapper recreational management in the Gulf of Mexico including how the season length projections were made, go to: <a href="http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\_fisheries/gulf\_fisheries/red\_snapper/index.">http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\_fisheries/gulf\_fisheries/red\_snapper/index.</a> html.

#### What does Amendment 28 do?

- Reallocate the Gulf of Mexico red snapper stock annual catch limit between the recreational and commercial sectors of the reef fish fishery.
- Based on the reallocation, the final rule sets the 2016 and 2017 red snapper commercial and recreational quotas.
- Based on the new recreational quotas, the rule sets the 2016 and 2017 federally permitted for-hire and private angling component sub-quotas.
- The rule also sets the 2016 and 2017 recreational sector and respective recreational component annual catch targets.

## Definitions Annual Catch Limits are the amount of fish that can be harvested from the stock each year. Note: For red snapper.

harvested from the stock each year. Note: For red snapper, quotas are considered the same as annual catch limits

Annual catch target is the acceptable level of landings that provide a buffer, if needed, for management uncertainty.

#### What is the new red snapper allocation?

- Amendment 28 reallocates 2.5 percent of the stock annual catch limit from the commercial sector to the recreational sector.
- The resulting commercial and recreational quotas are based on the new 48.5:51.5 percent allocation of the stock annual catch limit rather than the old 51:49 percent allocation.

#### What was the rationale for changing the allocation?

- To reallocate the red snapper harvest consistent with the 2014 red snapper update assessment.
- To ensure the allowable catch and recovery benefits from a rebuilding population are fairly and equitably allocated between commercial and recreational fishermen.

#### What are the quotas and annual catch targets for 2016 and 2017?

Table 1 shows the 2016 and 2017 quotas and annual catch targets.

**Table 1.** Gulf of Mexico red snapper 2016 and 2017 commercial and recreational quotas, recreational annual catch targets, and recreational federal for-hire and private angling component quotas and annual catch targets. Note the quotas and annual catch targets are in millions of pounds whole weight.

| Sector or        | Quota |       | Annual catch target |       |
|------------------|-------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| component        | 2016  | 2017  | 2016                | 2017  |
| Commercial       | 6.768 | 6.664 |                     |       |
| Recreational     | 7.192 | 7.076 | 5.754               | 5.661 |
| Federal for-hire | 3.042 | 2.993 | 2.434               | 2.395 |
| Private angling  | 4.150 | 4.083 | 3.320               | 3.266 |

### How did the Council determine how to divide the stock red snapper annual catch limit between the commercial and recreational sectors?

- The new allocation was based on changes in how the recreational catch is estimated.
- The red snapper annual catch limit was calculated using both the old and new recreational catch estimates.
- The new recreational catch estimates were higher because of changes in methodology.
- The higher catch estimates resulted in higher annual catch limit estimates from the stock assessment.
- The difference between the two red snapper annual catch limits was then added to the recreational quota.
- The result was a 2.5 percent shift in allocation from the commercial fishery to the recreational fishery.

#### **Additional information on Amendment 28**

 You may obtain electronic copies of Amendment 28 and the final rule from the NOAA Fisheries Web site:

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sustainable\_fisheries/gulf\_fisheries/reef\_fish/2013/am2\_8/index.html\_or the e-Rulemaking Portal: www.regulations.gov.